



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE ARRESTS NINE ILLEGAL WORKERS EMPLOYED BY SUBCONTRACTOR AT CHEMICAL MILITARY TESTING SITE *Utah facility used by military for chemical and biological defensive tests*

SALT LAKE CITY – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested nine illegal aliens at the Dugway Proving Ground overnight who were working for a subcontractor at the military testing facility located 80 miles southwest of Salt Lake City.

The nine unauthorized workers from Mexico were taken into custody by ICE agents yesterday evening inside the perimeter of the highly sensitive site, which serves as a major chemical and biological testing center for the Department of Defense. The foreign nationals were employed by Spacecon West, a subcontractor hired to do maintenance and construction work at the facility. ICE agents say two of those arrested had Utah Identification Cards, but none of the employees had valid work authorization documents. Military authorities emphasize that the individuals taken into custody were working in an area several miles from where the actual chemical and biological testing is done.

The lead in the case came as a result of a Project Shield America visit by ICE agents to the Proving Ground last week. During that visit, military representatives advised ICE about their suspicions that some subcontractors on the base were using unauthorized workers. Project Shield America is an ongoing effort by ICE to prevent the illegal acquisition and export of sensitive technology and weaponry. As part of the initiative, ICE agents conduct regular outreach visits to companies and facilities involved in the production and export of sensitive military technology.

“We are working closely with the authorities at the Dugway Proving Ground in this ongoing investigation and are receiving the military’s full cooperation,” said Joseph Romel, assistant special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Utah. “This is another example of how ICE is using its unique immigration enforcement authorities to safeguard worksites and installations that are potentially vulnerable to security threats or sabotage.”

The workers, who are being processed at ICE’s office in Salt Lake City, will be placed in immigration removal proceedings.

Yesterday's arrests are the latest in ICE's ongoing efforts to target and remove illegal aliens working at sensitive sites and critical infrastructure locations around the nation, including defense facilities, nuclear plants, chemical plants, airports, and seaports. Unauthorized workers with access to security sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities are vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists, smugglers, traffickers or other criminals. In accordance with ICE's homeland security mission, ICE agents prioritize worksite enforcement efforts by focusing on investigations related to critical infrastructure and national security.

To aid employers with the immigration document screening process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that businesses can use to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. Nationwide, there are thousands of employer sites linked into the Basic Pilot Program. Interested employers are urged to call the agency's toll-free number (888-464-4218) to obtain more information.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.